

find that the sense is neither more nor less for your having cleared the composition of these epithets of chalk of various colours, with which the tame thoughts had submitted to be dappled and made fine.

Under the denomination of mock-eloquence may also be placed the mode of writing which endeavours to excite the passions, not by presenting striking ideas of the object of passion, but by the appearance of an emphatical enunciation of the writer's own feelings concerning it. You are not made to perceive how the thing itself has the most interesting claims on your heart; but are required to be affected in mere sympathy with the author, who attempts your feelings by frequent exclamations, and perhaps by an incessant application to his fellow-mortals, or to their Redeemer, of all the appellations and epithets of passion, and sometimes of a kind of passion not appropriate to the object. To this last great Object, especially, such forms of expression are occasionally applied, as must excite a revolting emotion in a man who feels that he cannot meet the same being at once on terms of adoration and of caressing equality.

It would be going beyond my purpose, to carry my remarks from the literary merits, to the moral and theological characteristics, of Christian books; else a very strange account could be given of the injuries which the gospel has suffered from its friends. You might often meet with a systematic writer, in whose hands the whole wealth, and variety, and magnificence, of revelation, shrink into a meagre list of doctrinal points, and who will let no verse in the Bible tell its meaning, or presume to have one, till it has taken its stand by one of those points. You may meet with a Christian polemic, who seems to value the arguments for evangelical truth as an assassin values his dagger, and for the same reason; with a descant on the invisible world, who makes you think of a popish cathedral, and from the vulgarity of whose illuminations you are glad to escape into the solemn twilight of faith; or with a grim zealot for such a theory of the divine attributes and government, as seems to delight in representing the Deity as a dreadful king of furies, whose dominion is overshadowed with vengeance, whose music is the cries of victims, and